

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF
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NEWS RELEASE

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ARCHITREATS: FOOD FOR THOUGHT PRESENTATION
SHAKING THE FOUNDATIONS: ALABAMA IN THE 1930s AND 1940s
BY LEAH RAWLS ATKINS
AT THE ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY

ArchiTreats: Food for Thought celebrates the *Year of Alabama History* through a series of sequential lectures in Alabama history by leading experts in the field. Join us at **noon on Thursday, September 17** as **Leah Rawls Atkins** presents *Shaking the Foundations: Alabama in the 1930s and 1940s*. This presentation will be held at the Alabama Department of Archives and History.

The Great Depression and World War II were watershed years for the state of Alabama. From the poverty and despair of the most severe economic depression in American history, the state began to emerge from the hard times to prosper from the billion-dollar economic development that poured into Alabama to finance defense and, later, war industries and military bases. Alabama took a leadership role in preparing the nation for war and training and supplying troops. From air bases, such as Maxwell Field, to forts such as Fort McClellan, to military camps, such as Camp Rucker; to the steel mills of Birmingham and the Port of Mobile ship-building operations; to the men and women who volunteered; from the aluminum plants to the explosives plants, Alabama was a vital cog in the nation's defense. The driving forces in these years shook the foundations of politics and society, forcing Alabama to face challenges in a new world.

Dr. Leah Rawls Atkins retired in 1995 after a decade with Auburn University's Caroline Marshall Draughon Center for the Arts & Humanities, where she directed four major NEH-funded library-based public programs: "The Civil War: Crossroads of Our Being," "World War II: Home Front/ War Fronts," "Reading Our Lives: Southern Autobiography," and "Read Alabama!" She taught history at Auburn and at Samford University. She was the secretary of the Alabama Historical Association (AHA) and has served as president of both the AHA and the Association of Alabama Historians. She was on the founding board of the Friends of the Archives, and she presently serves on the board of the Archives and History Foundation and the Cahaba Foundation, which is devoted to preserving the site of Alabama's first capital. She has authored and a co-authored many works including *Alabama: The History of a Deep South State* and a fourth-grade Alabama history textbook. Her centennial history of the Alabama Power Company won AHA's Sulzby Award in 2006.

This ArchiTreats presentation is made possible by the Friends of the Alabama Archives and a grant from the Alabama Humanities Foundation, a state program of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The public is invited to bring a sack lunch and enjoy a bit of Alabama history. Coffee and tea will be provided by the Friends of the Alabama Archives. For more information, call (334) 353-4712.

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